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BROWNBACK CONDEMNS TERRORISTS' RELEASE

WASHINGTON – U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback today condemned the president's action in granting clemency to the 16 terrorists who were members of the Armed Forces of National Liberation (FALN). S.J. Res. 33, the FALN Clemency Resolution condemning the president's action passed the Senate 95-2.

"I rise in support of the resolution condemning the president's actions in granting clemency to 16 terrorists who are members of the Armed Forces of National Liberation, FALN," Brownback said.

"The president's condition for releasing these men was that they would be willing to say that they would not use violence anymore. This is a standard that I think would easily be met by almost everyone in prison in America today. The condition is a sham. The F.B.I., the Justice Department, and the Bureau of Prisons all recommended strongly that these terrorists not be released, and yet the president went ahead and released these terrorists.

"This administration claims to understand that terrorism is one of the greatest threats facing America, and it is. We see this threat being proposed and acted upon in many places around the world. Yet this act by the administration – releasing these terrorists – will have the effect of encouraging terrorism. The administration is repeatedly telling us that they're bringing terrorists to justice and that it is a high priority. However, this act of releasing terrorists is not compatible with the act of saying that we're going to fight terrorism.

"By his actions, the president is sending a message that, in fact, he does not take terrorism seriously, that it's ok to kill and maim American people. After all, the president may pardon you, even when there is no petition of clemency before him. This encourages terrorism, and we should be very clear about that.

"At a time when terrorism is a great threat to our peace and prosperity, at a time when terrorism has touched everywhere in this nation, at a time when Americans face terrorist threats all around the world, the last thing we should do is be granting clemency to convicted terrorists. I believe that Congress should be standing up to tell the president, as well as the country, that we strongly condemn pardoning terrorists who have killed and show no remorse whatsoever.

"Whatever the reason the president took this action, it is clear that the pardon was not based on the merits. In carrying through with this, he severely damaged our leadership in the world fight against terrorism. The FALN carried through more violence than any other terrorist group in the United States. They pose a direct threat to the safety of American citizens on American soil everywhere. Yes, these convicted terrorists have spent some time in jail, but the acts these people committed were the most heinous and should not seem less so simply because of the passage of time. A fair court system found them guilty and punished them accordingly, and nothing they have done or said since can justify their unsolicited release.

"Making concessions to terrorists is wrong and it's very harmful to us as a nation and as a people. In so doing, the president has made a mockery of all the administration's tough talk about terrorism and the need to combat it worldwide. This is an action that should be roundly condemned," Brownback said.